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Whereupon it was ordered, that the grand committee shall consider what persons, members of this house, shall be thought fit to be presented to the Lord Deputy, with desire to be recommended by his Lordship to go over after this sessions into England to his Majesty, with such acts and propositions as the House shall desire to be transmitted into England, to be propounded the next sessions, and to consider of all fitting circumstances of the persons that shall be appointed to go.

15 *Maij*. 1616—Upon question had, touching the persons, members of this House of Commons, that were to be sent into England from the said House by special election, Sir Thomas Ridgway, Vice Treasurer, and Sir James Hamilton, knights, both of his Majesty's privy councell here, and Sir John Everard, knight, and Richard Bolton, Esq., were named and chosen by the knights, citizens, and burgesses of the Commons House of Parliament, to be recommended first to the Lord Deputy, with humble desire that "his lordship would be pleased to recommend them, with the affairs of the commonwealth given in charge, whereof his lordship shall think fit to give allowance and approbation to his sacred Majesty, and the lords of his most honourable privy councell in England."

ANCIENT ROMAN INTERCOURSE WITH IRELAND.

A communication from Mr. Carruthers, published in a late number of the *Proceedings of the Kilkenny Archæological Society*, respecting the discovery of some alleged Roman remains near Donaghadee, on the coast of the County of Down, has induced me to put together the few following observations;—not, indeed, with the vain expectation of throwing any new light on so obscure a subject, but merely with the view of "ventilating," in this Journal, the exceedingly interesting questions—Had the Romans or Romano-British any intercourse with Ireland? If they had, what was its nature?

At an early period of the Roman rule in Britain, during the reign of the twelfth Cæsar, Domitian, Ireland attracted the attention of the conquering race. The spring of A.D. 82, found the proprætor, Julius Agricola, in Scotland, commencing his fifth campaign.[a] Having, during the previous year, secured his conquests, for so far, as he thought, by building a chain of forts across the "upper isthmus," between the Clyde and Forth, he now turned his attention to the south-western district. Sailing across the estuary of the Clyde, he landed somewhere in Ayrshire; and, after fighting several successful battles with previously unknown tribes, he, in the course of the summer, reduced to submission the whole Galwegian territory lying between the former river and the Solway.[b] Agricola then led his forces to that part of the country nearest to Ireland, where he went into winter quarters, constructing the usual defences; not, as Tacitus tells us, on account of any apprehension of danger, but in contemplation of a future project.[c] That project was the invasion and conquest of Ireland; for which Agricola's main motive arose from a mistaken idea respecting its geographical position. Considering it to be situated equi-distant from Britain, France, and Spain, the Roman governor,

[a] In assigning the date to the numerical order of Agricola's campaigns, a difference of one year exists among authors. The above, however, is, in all likelihood, the correct date, and sufficiently accurate for the purpose.

[b] I use the modern names of places advisedly.

[c] Eamque partem Brittaniæ, quæ Hiberniam aspicit, copiis instruxit, in spem magis, quam ob formidinem.

with the eye of a statesman and general, saw the great political and military importance of such a position, as a connecting link between these already subjugated countries, at a time when the rude infancy of navigation rendered communication tardy, uncertain, and infrequent.[d]

A glance at a map is quite sufficient to acquaint us with what Tacitus meant by that part of Britain "quæ Hiberniam aspicit." There cannot be a shadow of doubt that Agricola wintered his army in the peninsula formed by Lough Ryan and the Bay of Luce. Indeed, the remains of the field-works he threw up at the narrow isthmus between the above-mentioned bay and lough, to prevent a surprise in force, according to the predatory tactics of his enemies, are still in existence. There Agricola passed the winter of 82-3, while the Voluntii of Down, in all probability, kept careful watch and ward on the Irish coast, anxiously gazing, from hill and artificial mound, to spy the first movements of the dreaded and world-famous foe.

Agricola experienced no difficulty in obtaining information respecting the country he intended to invade, from merchants who were well acquainted with its coasts and harbours. Moreover, like an old edition of an old story, a fugitive Irish prince was already in Agricola's camp, whom the politic Roman, under a show of friendship, detained, to be used as a befitting tool when occasion served.[e] Agricola was confident of success. His son-in-law, who records these matters, states that he often heard him declare that a single legion, with a modicum of auxiliaries, would quite suffice for the conquest of Ireland. And such an event, he continued, would greatly contribute to bridle the stubborn spirit of the Britons, who then would see, with dismay, the Roman arms everywhere triumphant, and every spark of freedom extinguished round their coast.[f] It would be little better than absurd for us now to speculate whether Agricola's estimate of the small force requisite to subdue Ireland was correct or otherwise; nor need our sensibilities be offended at the rather low idea he seems to have held of Irish valour and resistance. Yet, there can be little doubt, that if the Romans had once landed, they would have built forts and constructed roads step by step as they advanced into the interior; they would also have received certain tribes as auxiliaries, and pitted them against the others; and ultimately would have subdued the whole island in a tithe of the time that the English subsequently occupied in doing it.

But it was not to be. Instead of invading Ireland in the spring of 83, Agricola was compelled to lead his forces to the eastern coast of Scotland, to repel the northern Britons; who, during the winter, had penetrated the line of forts, and made harassing inroads into the southern districts, then under Roman sway and protection. Agricola, at this juncture, perceiving that Scotland must be effectually conquered previous to his carrying on operations against Ireland, occupied the campaign of 83 in subduing and taking possession of Fife and Kinross, as a necessary preparatory movement towards his grand object of reducing the entire northern part of the island in the following year.

[d] Si quidem Hibernia, medio inter Britanniam atque Hispaniam sita, et Gallico quoque mari opportuna, valentissimam Imperii partem magnis invicem usibus miscuerit.

[e] Agricola expulsum seditione domestica unum ex Regulis gentis exceperat ac specie amicitiæ in occasionem retinebat.

[f] Sæpe ex eo audivi, legione una et modicis auxiliis debellari obtineri quo Hiberniam posse. Idque etiam adversus Britanniam profuturam, si Romana ubique arma, et velut e conspectu libertas tolleretur.

In 84, Agricola, his right flank supported by his eastern fleet, marching northwards, fought and won his great battle with Galgacus, in Perthshire; this victory gave him the command of all Britain. The fleet, by Agricola's order, sailed round the north of Scotland, took possession of the Orkneys, and came into the Irish channel, surveying the coasts, and collecting information by the way. This passage satisfactorily solved the till then doubtful question, whether Britain was an island or part of a continent;[g] and, in all probability, Agricola's motive in sending the fleet round was connected with his intended invasion of Ireland. But Domitian, jealous of the great general's fame, recalled him to Rome, and the terse and talented Tacitus had no more to relate of his actions in these countries.

For some time after the departure of Agricola, the history of the Romans in Britain is a complete blank—we do not even know who succeeded him in the proprætorship—but as it is known that he left the province in perfectly peaceful subjection, some writers fancy that the Romans, taking advantage of this tranquil state of affairs, passed over into and subdued Ireland. This fancy, (for undoubtedly it is nothing more,) is strengthened by, or rather, I should say, founded upon, a passage in Juvenal; for, where the historian is silent, the satirist is, at least, the next best authority. In his second Satire, supposed to have been written only twelve years after Agricola's departure from Britain, Juvenal, contrasting the power of the Roman arms abroad, with the shameful and enervating vices that prevailed at home, says:—

"Arma quidem ultra
Littora Juvernæ promovimus, et modo captas
Orcadas ac minima contentos nocte Britannos."[h]

That the Romans may have claimed a nominal sovereignty over Ireland, through the submission of some exiled chieftains, is probable enough; but that they ever occupied any part of the island, in any force, is positively contradicted by the utter absence of their usual great public and private works, which always seem as if they had been constructed in defiance of time itself.[i] Besides, we have

[g] Though Cæsar spoke of Britain as an island, the Romans had no positive knowledge on the subject, till Agricola accidently discovered the fact, through a remarkable event that occurred during the Galloway campaign. A cohort of Usipean auxiliaries mutinying, murdered their officers, seized three small vessels, and put to sea. The pilots, with true Roman firmness, refusing to aid the deserters, were put to death, and the latter, utterly ignorant of navigation, drifted about at the mercy of the waves, occasionally landing on the coast to plunder provisions. One of these vessels actually drifted round the north of Scotland, into the German Ocean, and from thence into the Baltic; thus practically proving the insular character of Britain. Some of the wretched men were still alive at the end of this extraordinary voyage, having subsisted on the dead bodies of their companions. Seized as pirates and sold as slaves, they were soon sent back to the Roman authorities; but, on account of their sufferings and remarkable voyage, they were received, not as mutineers and deserters, but as heroes and explorers.

[h] "We have, indeed, carried our arms beyond the shores of Ireland, and the Orkneys lately subdued, and the Britains contented with a very short night." "*Contentos nocte Britannos*" evidently is an allusion to the extreme northern parts of the island.

[i] I might also add the absence of the coins found in such abundance in Britain, especially in the neighbourhood of Roman towns and stations. It would almost seem as if the Romans had sown their money broad-cast over the land. Ages have passed away, and yet these coins are still plentiful; nor can antiquaries assign any reasonable explanation of this very curious circumstance. Walking, a few years ago, over the interior of Burgh, in Suffolk, the ancient Gariannonum, I found five coins within a less distance than one hundred yards, though the ground has been cultivated from time immemorial, and at the period of my visit women and children were busy gleaning in the field. A sackful of coins, all of course greatly decayed, might have been obtained from the neighbouring cottager's children. At other Roman stations in England and in France a similar abundance of coins prevails.

a significant glimpse of the relations existing between the Irish and Romans, during the tranquil period after the departure of Agricola, which is utterly incompatible with subjection on one side or domination on the other. Four legions only, with their attendant auxiliaries, were required to maintain order in Britain, and they were permanently posted in the places which they retained till nearly the end of the Roman dominion. Of these, the twentieth legion was stationed at Deva (the modern Chester) to hold in restraint the fierce mountaineers of Westmoreland and Cumberland, and protect the estuary of the Dee from the ravages of Irish pirates. Of course, the Romans, in their own estimation at least, were warriors and conquerors; the outside barbarians mere murderers and pirates. The second legion was posted at the Silurian Isca, (Caerleon, in Monmouthshire,) to keep in check the indomitable Welsh "mountain-people," and defend the shores of the Severn against the aforesaid pirates. Moreover, it appears highly probable to me that the Roman Retigonum, (the modern Stranraer,) commanding the isthmus between Lough Ryan and Bay of Luce, was an important defensive post, established to prevent an advance into the interior by any Irish invaders, who, taking advantage of the "short-sea," might land at any point between Corse-wall and the Mull of Galloway

Even then, however, there must have been considerable communication between Ireland and Roman Britain. Early in the second century Ptolemy wrote his Geographical Survey of the World; and his description of the coast, inland towns, and native tribes of Ireland, is surprisingly copious and exact. It is not too much to say, that at that period, leaving hydrographical accuracy out of the question, the Romans knew a great deal more of Ireland, than we now do of Madagascar.

Towards the close of the second, and the early part of the third century, was the palmy era of the Roman rule in Britain, which then was certainly the richest and most flourishing province of the whole empire. The abundance and variety of mineral wealth, the luxuriant crops afforded by a virgin soil to even an inferior cultivation, the adaptability of the earths for ceramic manufactures, attracted numbers of adventurers from all parts of the empire to the British shores. Merchants, mechanics, miners, and agriculturists led the way, and were soon followed by professional men, architects, artists, and artisans, as labour and industry created wealth and luxury; and magnificent temples, palaces, villas, baths, and theatres rose up over the peaceable and productive province. It is most reasonable to suppose—indeed it would be contrary to the very nature of things to doubt—that this wealthy, intelligent, manufacturing, mining, and mercantile Romano-British population maintained a considerable traffic with Ireland; and that many of them visited it as political envoys, traders, travellers in search of information, or, with the errant disposition of man, as physicians or handicraftsmen, seeking adventure and lucrative employment in a country less advanced in civilisation than their own. The simple, yet interesting circumstance, of a Roman medicine-stamp having been found in Tipperary, is strongly in favour of this not unfeasible opinion. It is generally agreed, by the best antiquaries, that these occulists' stamps, of which about sixty altogether have been found in various parts of the ancient Roman Empire, (but none, I believe, in Italy,) were not used by regular

practitioners, but by empirical medicine vendors to impress their wares—the patent medicines, in short, of the Romans. In that case, then, the existence of the stamp implies the manufacture of the medicament in Ireland; and probably Marcus Juventius Tutianus, the Romano-Hibernian "Holloway," exhibited a shrewd judgment when he selected Tipperary as his head quarters for the manufacture of an eye-salve, "*ad veteres cicatrices.*"[j]

That many of the Romano-British visited Ireland is more than simply probable;—that some remained and died in this island is equally so; but the few scattered Romans who may have died in Ireland were strangers in a strange land, and we cannot expect to find in this country the distinctive Roman sepulchre, authenticated by the many well-known proofs afforded by the manufactures and peculiar burial customs of that people. This brings me back to my starting point, the communication of Mr. Carruthers, and I regret to say, with all due deference to that gentleman, that, though I agree with him to a certain extent, I cannot go all the way with him. I can see no improbability whatever in the assumption that a Roman "had been voyaging past the county Down, and had died either unexpectedly on board, or in a fit of illness after having been removed on shore." But the very act of bringing the body on shore, either alive or dead, under the above conditions, would imply that the deceased was a person of rank or distinction; and it is well known that in such cases it was the Roman custom to burn the body on the nearest convenient spot, and carry away the ashes, to be interred with the usual ceremonies and accompaniments, elsewhere in Italy, Gaul, or Britain, near the remains of the deceased's kindred. Besides, there was nothing distinctively Roman in the remains found near Donaghadee—nothing but what has been found in Celtic as well as Saxon sepulchres. In short, though a Roman might have been buried at the place, and in the manner alleged, there is no evidence whatever to support such an assumption—one, in my opinion, too lightly hazarded.

W. PINKERTON.

IRISH BREHONS AND THEIR LAWS.

BY HERBERT FRANCIS HORE.

An account of the social state of an ancient people is acknowledged to be the most interesting portion of their annals. Accordingly, historiographers, remembering the dictum of Gibbon, that the "laws of a nation form the most instructive portion of its history," are eagerly directing their attention to all that illustrates the old manners, legal customs, and social condition of the nations to whom their labours are devoted. The archæologists and future historians of Ireland have a rich lite-

[j] See the very interesting *Descriptive Catalogue of the Collection of Antiquities and other Objects illustrative of Irish History*, exhibited in the Museum, Belfast, on the occasion of the meeting of the British Association in that town.—Belfast, Archer & Sons, 1852.